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Matteo Falcone

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CLXXXVIII.

FRENCH'S MINOR DRAMA.

The Acting Edition.

MATTEO FALCONE;

OR,

The Brigand and his Son.

A MELO-DRAMA, IN ONE ACT,

BY WM. HENRY OXBERRY, COMEDIAN.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and
the whole of the Stage Business.

AS NOW PERFORMED AT THE PRINCIPAL ENGLISH
AND AMERICAN THEATRES.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH, PUBLISHER,
122 NASSAU STREET, (UP STAIRS.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS. — [MATTEO FALCONE.]

<i>English Opera House, 1836.</i>	<i>Federal Street, Boston, 1837.</i>	<i>Trinmont, Boston, 1842.</i>	<i>Museum, Boston, 1847.</i>
<i>Captain Alezzio</i> ,.....	Mr. Ireland.....	Mr. Anderton.....	Mr. W. H. Curtis.....
<i>Sergeant Nicolo Gamba</i> ,.....	" Romer.....	" G. H. Andrews...	" S. D. Johnson.....
<i>Matteo Falcone</i> ,.....	" Perkins.....	" J. G. Gilbert.....	" W. L. Ayling.....
<i>Giannetto Sampiero</i> ,.....	" M'Inn.....	" J. E. Murdock....	" A. W. Fenno.....
<i>Brezza</i> ,.....	" Sanders.....	" E. L. Davenport..	" J. Adams.....
<i>Fortunato Falcone</i> ,.....	Mrs. Keeley.....	Miss C. Cushman.....	Miss A. Phillips.....
<i>Giuseppina</i> , Matteo's Wife,.....	Miss Gilbert.....	Miss Bartlett.....	Miss Boquet.....
<i>Soldiers, Brigands, Peasants, &c.</i>			Miss Rees.

SCENE—Corsica. TIME—One Day.

COSTUMES.

- Matteo*.—Brigand jacket, brown breeches, sheep skin waistcoat, brigand leggins.
Giannello.—Grey brigand jacket and breeches, calf skin vest, brigand leggins.
Corporal Nicolo.—White Italian uniform, large cocked hat.
Captain Alezzio.—White uniform.
Fortunato.—Small blue jacket, sheep skin vest, striped breeches, fleshings, brigand leggins.
Giuseppina.—Blue short skirt, Italian flat cap, blue stockings, brown bodice.

MATTEO FALCONE.

SCENE I.—*A village in Corsica. Exterior of an Inn 3 G. SOLDIERS and PEASANTS regaling. MATTEO FALCONE and GIANETTO SAMPIERO appear at back, disguised as peasants, watching them. Table and seats, R. C.*

DANCE AND CHORUS.

Let us banish care and woe,
While the morning sun is bright;
Let the generous nectar flow,
And fill our hearts with sweet delight.

Now our pretty maids advance,
Lightly trip in sportive dance;
Good wine we quaff,
And merrily laugh—ha, ha, ha!

[MATTEO and GIANETTO come forward.

Mat [*Aside to GIANETTO.*] Gianetto, join the dance it will prevent suspicion. I will sit at the table and endeavor to gather information from their conversation.

GIANETTO takes a peasant girl, and they dance the *Turantula*. After dance, GIANETTO advances to MATTEO.

Gia Matteo, you seem thoughtful.

Mat I am meditating by what means I can frustrate the designs of these bloodhounds, and save my brave band. The muster strong—treble my number.

Gia And your band outnumbered mine. United, they would make a noble front against these hireling gaddies. Let us stand together and make common cause against our would-be exterminators.

Mat Agreed! [*Shake hands.*] Should they attack you first, a lighted beacon from the Devil's Mount shall bring my men to your aid; the same signal from the Monte Rotundo will summon you to my relief. I am known, in fact, related, to the garrulous corporal of this party you saw just now; this fool, I mean.

[*Pointing to NICOLÒ, who enters from Inn, L. E.*

Nic Now, my merry men, don't fall out with me when I tell you you must fall in. The commanding officer is about to reconnoitre. A reinforcement will join us to-night at the Monte Rotundo.

Mat [*Aside to Gia*] Do you mark that?

Nic I am sorry to spoil sport, but I must now give the last toast. Fill me a horn of Campoloro. "Success to our enterprise!" [*They drink.*] It's a noble duty we have to perform—to free our country of these freebooters who infest our mountains, and who rob, plunder, and cut the throats of the peaceful inhabitants of the island. We'll hunt and exterminate the race of them, from Cape Corso to Bonafacio. We'll march into their secret haunts, and hunt them out as ferrets do the rats.

Mat [*Aside to NICOLÒ*] Beware you set not traps to snare yourselves.

Nic [*Alarmed*] Ha! this is—

Mat [*Shows stiletto.*] Your cousin!

Nic Your cousin!—yes—[*Aside,*]—curse the relationship.

Mat [*Aside to NICOLÒ.*] Would you betray your cousin? You are the only person here who knows me—one word or sign and you're a dead man. You know me—

Nic I have that felicity—[*Aside*]—unfortunately! And who is this man with you?

Gia [*Picking his teeth with his stiletto.*] A friend!

Nic [*Seeing stiletto.*] Oh, I understand—

Mat Adio, cousin! Should you pass my mountain hut I'll make you welcome, as a friend; but for your own safety's sake come not in that dress, or you may receive a warmer reception than you would desire. Adio, cousin!

MATTEO and GIANETTO are on each side of NICOLÒ. As they exeunt they each show stiletto.

Nic Oh, good bye, and good riddance! Endangering my safety as well as their own! Should the commanding officer find out who they were, and saw me on such friendly terms with them, I should get shot as an accomplice!

Enter CAPTAIN ALEZZIO, D. F. L.

Capt We must commence our march. Fall in! To the Monte Rotundo—march!

Music. SOLDIERS march off, R. 1 E. PEASANTS form Tableau.

SCENE II.—*Mountain Pass. Music piz. GIANETTO enters L. 2 R., in his Brigand's dress.*

Gia They are on the march! I will attack them. It will be unexpected, and my success certain. They rush to their own destruction.

Now to summon my brave band, and then, like hunted boars at bay, in our turn attack our hunters.

Blows whistle. The BRIGANDS enter from R. 2 E.

Omnès Hail to our leader, Sampiero!

Gia Brave hearts! I bring ye tidings of the enemy. They are now on their march; they expect to find us here—they shall not be disappointed!

Brozzo But our numbers——

Gia What! do you quail?

Brozzo No—courage is not wanting here. Still, will our strength compete with theirs.

Gia They are here but to reconnoitre. They meditate no attack until they are reinforced to-night. Ere that arrives I'll cut them into peaces. Falcone's band will aid us to beat back the reinforcement. To-night he leads his men to the Devil's Pass; there, should their numbers treble ours, their destruction would be inevitable. [*March p. p.*] Ha! they come! In the ravine we can conceal ourselves! [*March forth, Exeunt R.*

Enter ALEZZO, NICOLÒ and SOLDIERS, L. 2 E.

Capt Halt! From yonder eminence we can survey the country round, and observe the hiding places of these locusts. Corporal, how you loiter. Forward!

Nic Consider my corporation!

[*Music. Exeunt R. 2 E.*

SCENE III.—*Corsican view extending to the extremity of stage. Bridge or rocky pass, with mountains in the distance. Hut on R. 3 E. Hay-cock on R. C. 4 E. FORTUNATO discovered loading rifle.*

Fort There, my little fellow, I've given you your dinner; some gunpowder, which will do for a curry, and you can fancy the bullet a dumpling; and now you have dined, you must get me something. Father and mother won't come home for some time, and when they do, it will be with good appetites. I must not leave the hut, but if a tit-bit of game should pass here within range of my rifle, down it comes to a dead certainty, and then how father will pat my head, and call me his own boy—and how proud I shall feel to show him my prize; but I'm reckoning my chickens before they are hatched. Oh, how I love a hunter's life!

. SONG.—FORTUNATO.

When the morning sun smiles on the dew-spangled thorn,
The chasseur is roused by the merry-toned horn.

Ye ho! la! la! la! la!

The light-footed chamois o'er mountains we trace,
 And with light-beating hearts we follow the chase,
 Through forests and wilds we merrily go,
 And the mountains re-echoe our yo ho he ho !
 Tral lal lal la !

The chase being o'er, our joys to enhance,
 We partake in the pleasure that's found in the dance—
 Ya la ! la ! la ! la !

The sound of sweet music is heard from afar,
 And we trip it away to the lightsome guitar.
 To the merry tarantella then we advance,
 And join in the sport of the heart-cheering dance.
 Tral lal lal la !

[*Gun fired without, R. U. E.*] Hollo ! fire away ! Somebody shooting in my preserves—I'll have a look-out. [*Mounts a hillock.*] Soldiers ! what's in the wind now, I wonder ? I wish father was at home, I'm afraid that—no, I'm not afraid. Father, when a wolf frightened me, scolded me, and said if I were his son, I must not fear man or devil. I am his son, and I won't be afraid. My rifle's loaded, and I'll give them a leaden dumpling if they touch me ; but they won't do that, for they are all afraid of father.

Music. *Gun fired R. U. E.* GIANNETTO appears on a prominence R., fires his gun, then runs down on to the stage.

Gia Bloodhounds ! your blood be on your own heads. I'm wounded ; two of them out of the five have already fallen ; curse on the wound, I could baffle them yet, would the blood but cease to flow. Ah ! they are close upon me.

Music and chord—He comes forward—FORTUNATO presents his carbine.

Gia Boy, what would you ?

Fort Not harm you—for you are wounded ; but I did not know but you might wish to harm me ; So keep your distance.

Gia You are the son of Matteo Falcone ?

Fort Yes.

Gia I am Gianetto Sampiero.

Fort I know ; you like my father, are chief of a band of—

Gia Silence, babbler !

Fort Oh, I know, brigands never betray each other.

Gia I am pursued ; hide me, for I cannot go further.

Fort. And what will my father say if I hide you without his leave ?

Gia He'll say you did right.

Fort I don't know that, you don't belong to his band.

Gia Hide me quick, they are coming.

Fort Wait till my father comes home.

Gia Wait! I cannot, they will be here in a moment, hide me this instant, or I will kill you.

Fort. You kill me? why, your carbine is discharged.

Gia I have a stiletto.

Fort. And I have a rifle, loaded; and if you come near me, I'll fire. Father is the best shot in the country—and he says I shall soon be as good, so I'm not afraid of missing such a big buck as you.

[*Presents rifle.*]

Gia You are no son of Matteo Falcone.

Fort. Father would knock you down as flat as a pancake, if he heard you say that; for he told me the other day, I was his own boy, and he was proud of me.

Gia Would you see me arrested at your father's threshold? they will drag me to prison, load me with chains, and condemn me to an ignominious death.

Fort. Would they? What cruel wretches! well, now, what will you give me to hide you?

Gia [*From his leathern pouch.*] This is all I have.

Fort Five francs! fear nothing, I'll hide you; here, creep under this straw—I'll sit upon you, and they won't find you.

Music. *He makes a hole*—GIANNETTO *creeps under*—FORTUNATO *sits on him.*

Enter CORPORAL NICOLÒ, over bridge R U E down L. with two Soldiers.

Nic This way he must have come; two of our comrades are severely wounded; this is the hut of Matteo Falcone, a cousin of mine—a very distant one I hope at this moment—he! why are not you Matteo Falcon's son?

Fort So my mother says.

Nic Indeed! then you are my little cousin.

Fort Then you are my big cousin, I suppose?

Nic. Bless me, how you have grown!

Fort And so have you grown, quite a great gawky; ill weeds will grow apace, as my grand mother says.

Nic I must be civil, the urchin's father may be near. Umph! have you seen a man go by just now—umph!

Fort Umph! how could I see, with my eyes shut, fast asleep.

Nic A man with a pointed hare skin cap—sheepskin jacket, and deer skin breeches—eh?

[*He gives a comic description of GIANNETTO's dress.*]

Fort The curate went by this morning on his old horse Peter.

Nic You little rogue, you are playing with me; tell me this moment which way Gianetto went, for he's the man we are in search of and I'm certain he took this path.

Fort I've not seen anyone. I tell you.

Nic It's all a lie.

Fort If you say that again I'll send a bullet through you.

Nic I have a great mind to——

Fort No, you haven't.

Nic Is your father at home?

Fort No? if he was, you would have been off long ago like a fly out of a mustard pot.

Nic I'm glad he's not then. [*Aside*] Why comrades, look here—here are traces of blood upon the straw. [*He pulls the hay about where FORTUNATO is sitting—FORTUNATO raps his toes with gun.*] Oh, my toe! My gracious, you little villain you have hit me on the corn.

Fort If you hadn't touched my hay, I wouldn't have touched your corn.

Nic It's all nonsense, you saying you were asleep—our guns must have woke you.

Fort Do you fancy your guns make so much noise? my father's carbine is much louder.

Nic The devil take you little wretch! I'm sure you saw Giannetto and for aught we know, may have concealed him. Come, comrades let us enter the house, and see if our man is here.

Fort And what will my father say, if anyone goes into his house whilst he was out?

Nic You little villain, when I've given you a few blows with the blade of my sword, you'll speak.

Fort My father is Matteo Falcone.

Nic Do you know, you little rogue, that I could carry you off to Bastia, if I liked, and have you put in a dungeon with nothing but bread and water, and clean straw.

Fort Eh! my father is Matteo Falcone!

Nic [*Aside*] I dare not quarrel with Matteo—and I dare not return without my prisoner. I've my doubts—I have it—I'll try the effects of a bribe; now, if you will tell me the truth—

Fort The son of Matteo Falcone, never told a lie.

Nic He's a regular chip of the old block. What would you say if I gave you something?

Fort I will give you something—advice; if you wait any longer Gianetto will reach the mountains, and then it will require a sharper fellow than you to catch him.

Nic [*Takes out his watch, which FORTUNATO gazes at with delight*] How would you like to have a watch, like that hanging by your side.

Fort Oh, if I had it, how I would strut about as proud as a peacock and if any one should ask me what o'clock it was, I should say, look at my watch; when I'm a big boy, my father will give me a watch.

Nic What would you say if I should give you this?

Fort Give it me and you shall see.

Nic Upon one condition; tell me where Gianette is, and it is yours.

Fort You are joking.

Nic By St. Jago, I am not; tell me where Gianette is concealed, and may I lose my epaulette, if I do not give you this watch—come now.

Fort Oh, bless it's pretty heart, how it ticks—oh, what a duck—what a pretty chain.

He gradually gets it into his hand and seems delighted. Avarice and the respect due to hospitality, are forcibly expressed by FORTUNATO—he seems irresolute—returns the watch to NICOLO—sighs—but in a moment takes it back again—puts it in his belt, and beckons NICOLO forward—and with his thumb over his shoulder to the haycock.

Nic Ah, indeed! comrades, search that straw.

Music. They advance—GIANETTO rushes out, on haycock R C.

Gia Maledizione!

[*Attempting to seize FORTUNATO.*

Fort I will give you back your five francs there.

[*Throws it before GIANETTO.*

Gia I am wounded. I cannot walk, you must carry me.

Nic I am so overjoyed at catching you, I could carry you on my back for a league without feeling tired; when we get to Crespoli, we shall find horses.

Music. They drag him over to L. MATTEO appears with his wife GUISEPPA on the brtdje at the back, L, he has two carbines across his shoulder.

Mat Soldiers at my hut! what can this mean, Guiseppa? Fear not, we are a match for them.

[*He advances.*

Fort Ah, here's my father!

Nic The devil there is. I don't feel at all comfortable; if Matteo by chance, should turn out to be Ginatto's friend—and should take it into his head to defend him—the bullets of his two rifles would reach two of us, as sure as a letter by the post, and if in spite of our relationship, he should aim at me. I'll put a good face on it, and make sure, I'll be uncommon friendly with him. MATTEO cautiously advances followed by his wife.—NICOLO runs to meet him.] What, my old friend, how are you again? hope you are well, my fine fellow, and what? Mistress Falcone! how charming you are looking—young Fortunato has grown a fine little fellow, very like his father; this is really a pleasure I never expected—I am truly delighted to see you once more. [*Aside*] That's the greatest lie I ever told—I wish they were a hundred leagues off.

Mat What brings you here?

Nic Eh? why, I—[*Aside.*] I think he's all right. Why I've had a long journey over the mountains, and I thought I'd just stop and give you a call, according to your invitation—its very fatiguing, don't ask me to dinner, for I can't stop, though I'm knocked up almost—musn't complain, for we've got a prize—a famous prize—we have just laid hold of Gianetto Sampiero.

Mat Poor devil! [*Aside*] They have been attacked then.

Nic The rogue defended himself like a lion; he has wounded two of my comrades; one of them has his arm broken, but he's only a Frenchman, so it's of no great consequence. After that he hid himself so cunningly, that the devil himself could not have discovered him. I shonld never have found him out if it had not been for my little cousin Fortunato.

Mat and Guis Fortunato.

Nic Yes ; Gianetto was hidden under that hay-cock but my little cousin put me up to his cunning, and I promise you that both your name and his, shall appear in the report I shall give in to the Advocate General

Mat [*His feelings excited.*] Damnation.

Nic Now then, we must march.

Gia Matteo Falcone, your son has betrayed me—Matteo Falcone, thus I spit upon thy threshold—it is the house of a traitor.

MATTEO clenches his stiletto at these words, but looking at his son in agony, hides his face in his hands to suppress his feelings. FORTUNATO who has entered the house, returns with a jug of wine, which he offers to GIANETTO who disdains it.

Gia Keep off, comrade give me some drink—I would rather drink water from him with whom I have just exchanged shots, than wine from your hands, Traitor !

Nic Now then, comrades, march—good bye, cousin, good bye, I'll call soon and stay a long while with you—[*Aside*] not within a hundred years if I know it. March !

Music. *Excunt* guarding GIANETTO across bridge and off R. MATTEO leaning on his carbine, his eyes fixed on his son with a look of concentrated anger, —FORTUNATO with a troubled eye watches him.

Mat You begin well.

Fort Father ! [*Bursting into tears and kneeling.*]

Mat [*In a loud tone.*] Stand back ! how came you by that watch ?

Fort My cousin, the corporal gave it me for—for—

Mat For betraying a fellow creature, wretch. [*He takes the watch from him and dashes it in pieces.*] Wife, is that boy mine !

Guis Matteo !

Mat Well, well, this child is the first of his race who ever proved himself a traitor.

Guis [*Stopping him.*] What would you do—how wildly your eyes glare.

Mat Let me alone, I am his father, leave me, go in, [*He locks the door upon her.*] Boy, listen to me, for gain you have betrayed Gianetto—you know the brigand's oath ? whosoever betrays his fellow, must fall by the hand of his nearest kin, you betrayed Sampiero. I am your father—though the fulfilment of my oath may rend my heart, it must be, ascend yon mount—[*He does so.*] kneel and say thy prayers.

Fort Father—dear father—do not kill me.

[*Music.*]

Mat My oath—have you finished ?

Fort Oh, father forgive me—mercy, I will pray to my cousin the Corporal to pardon Gianetto.

Mat Heaven have mercy on thee.

He cocks his carbine, greatly agitated. He is about to fire, when a confused noise is heard. Guns without, R. U. E.

Fort Father, do not fire. Gianetto has escaped, and pushed the two soldiers from the narrow bridge into the water. Cousin Gamba follows him—he turns upon him—he has pushed him into the ditch—Gianetto is here.

Music. GIANETTO enters, and crosses R. at back, and down L., where FOR. TUNATO directs him—CORPORAL NICOLO, covered with mud, follows him FORTUNATO stands between them, pointing his rifle at NICOLO.

Nic Put down your rifle. What would you do?

Fort Save Gianetto; I betrayed him, I will now defend him.

Nic Stand back, or I'll fire!

Fort You will, will you, you magpie! then to make sure I'll fire first. [*He fires at CORPORAL NICOLO, who runs off bellowing over bridge.*]

Gia Fortunato, I forgive thee—thy courage has wiped away the stain of traitor.

Mat Then he is my son again! boy, boy!

Fort [*Kneels*] Father! [*MATTEO clasps him in his arms.*]

Enter BROZZO on rock L. 3 E.

Broz Sampiero, a reinforcement is marching in this direction to aid the yellow collars. I have collected our band in the Devil's Pass. They think you dead or a prisoner, your presence at their head would rouse them to revenge.

Mat Sampiero, we will stand or fall together. [*Whistles.*]

FORTUNATO gets his rifle. The BRIGANDS enter R. and L. MATTEO and GIANETTO at back, FORTUNATO looking out. *Drum heard.*

Gia The foe advances, stand to your arms! At my signal [*Music*] let your rifles echo through the valley. Conceal yourselves. [*Exeunt R. and L.*]

Fort I'll stay by you, father.

Mat No, my boy, get into the house with your mother. Away, we'll soon beat these soldiers back.

Fort Oh, father, let me stay, I'm not afraid—I don't tremble—I can load your rifle for you.

Mat No, in I say—a stray shot might strike you.

Fort I care not, so you remain unhurt.

Mat Brave boy—but in, on the instant go.

For [*Shakes his hand.*] I'll have one shot at the rascals, if I die for it. [*Pretends to go, but conceals himself behind the eminence.*]

Mat They come—march. [*Conceals himself.*]

OFFICER, CORPORAL NICOLO, and SOLDIERS enter. *Music changes to hurry.*
MATTEO and GIANETTO with their party rush upon them. *General fight.*
MATTEO is overcome—FORTUNATO discharges his rifle and kills the OFFICER,
and stands before MATTEO. GIANETTO has felled a SOLDIER, and is about
to kill him, when the SOLDIER draws a pistol from his belt and shoots him.
The SOLDIERS are overpowered and surrender.

Mat We have conquered.

Gia [*Falls*] Hurrah!—hu——

Mat You are bleeding!

Gia It is my death wound—my heart—revenge me!—

GUISEPPA holds the cross which she wears round her neck before his eyes—he
kisses it and expires. *Slow music.*

THE END.



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